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ABSTRACT

This performance guide is designed for teachers to use with students before and after a performance of "Ramona Quimby," adapted by Len Jenkin from the Ramona books by Beverly Cleary. The guide, called a "Cuesheet," contains seven activity sheets for use in class, addressing: (1) The Characters (introducing the characters in the play, and theatre conventions such as scenes, narrators, and actors doubling roles); (2) The Story (offering a story synopsis); (3) Your Neighborhood (offering a description and a map of the neighborhood in which the story takes place, and the props and set pieces used to create that world); (4) From Book to Play (discussing how playwrights adapt books to plays and how this play was adapted from several books); (5) Imagination in "Ramona Quimby" (discussing the role of imagination in the play and in the theatre); (6) Beverly Cleary (about the author Beverly Cleary and how she came to write books); and (7) Going to the Kennedy Center (about the audience's important role in a performance and about the Kennedy Center itself). Resources for further exploration are listed. (SR)

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"Ramona Quimby": Adapted by Len Jenkin from the Ramona Books by Beverly Cleary. Cue Sheet for Students.

by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa

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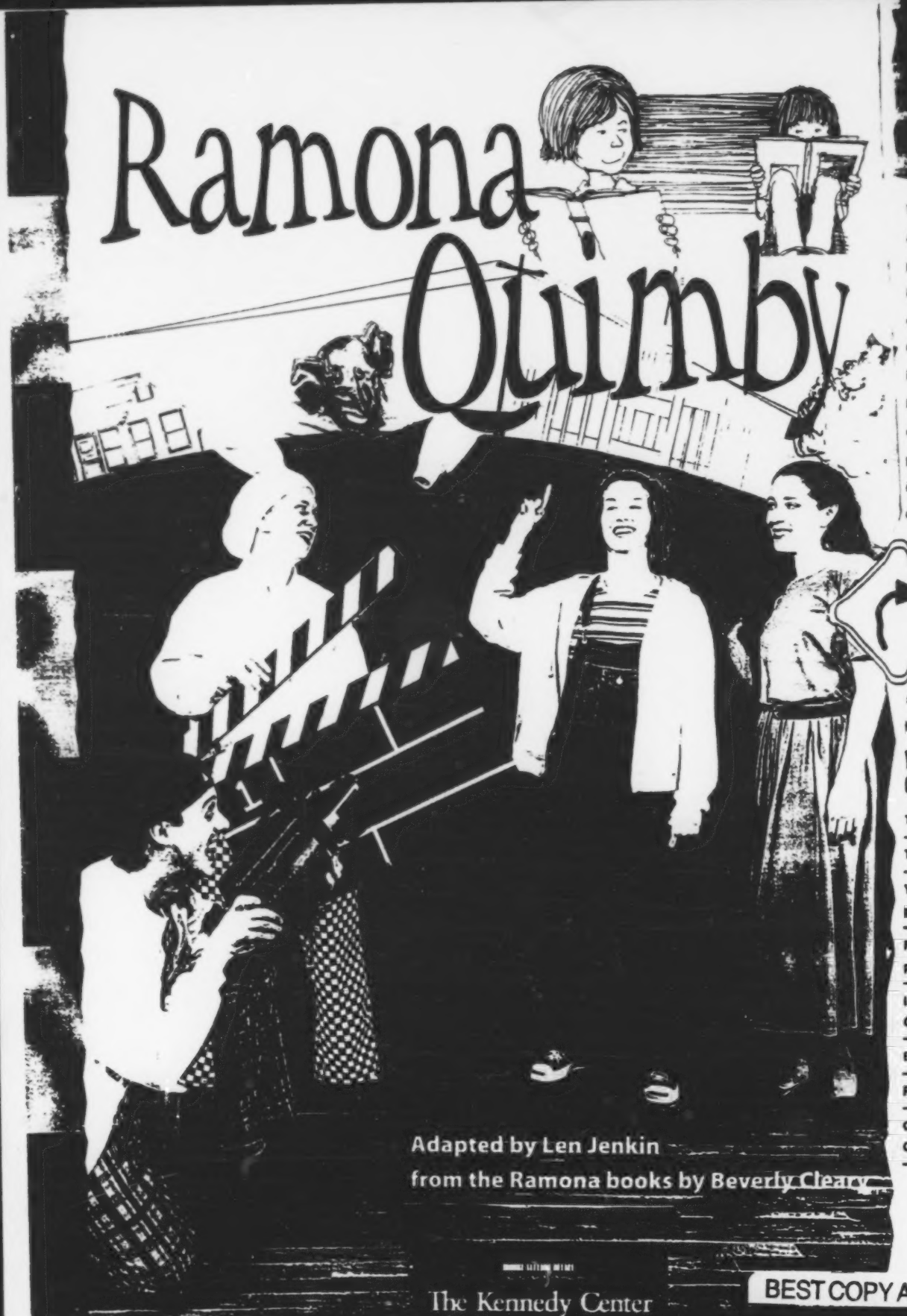
Ramona Quimby



Adapted by Len Jenkin
from the Ramona books by Beverly Cleary

The Kennedy Center

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Cue sheet FOR STUDENTS

Welcome to *Cuesheet*, a performance guide published by the Education Department of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. This *Cuesheet* is designed to help you prepare for the performance of *Ramona Quimby*.

The street sign marks activities you may want to do with other students, friends, or family.

What's in Cuesheet:

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The Story, page 3

Your Neighborhood, page 4

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The Characters

character — a person, an animal or sometimes an object in a play

play — a story performed on a stage

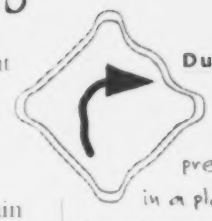
scene — a part of a play

"Hi, my name is Beatrice Quimby, but everyone calls me Beezus because my little sister Ramona couldn't say 'Beatrice' when she was a baby.

"Along with my sister, I'm the main **character** in the **play** you are seeing at the Kennedy Center. That means I'm in almost every **scene.** I'm also the play's narrator, which means I talk directly to you, the audience.

"I also narrate this *Cuesheet.* It's supposed to help you understand the play *Ramona Quimby* a little bit better and introduce you to the world of live theater. Like I say in the play, 'My job is to help you.'

"There are many other characters besides me in the play.



During the performance: People called actors perform in plays. Actors pretend to be the characters in a play. Sometimes, a grown-up plays the part of a child. And sometimes, one actor plays many different characters.

The play "Ramona Quimby" is performed by six grown-up actors who play many roles. During the performance, watch for the ways the actors change their voices, movements or costumes to become different characters.

"Ramona Quimby is my little sister. I love her, but she can be a pest.

Ms. Quimby, my mother, takes care of us.

Mr. Quimby, my father, works in a frozen food warehouse.

Howie, Ramona's friend, lives next door.

Aunt Bea is our favorite aunt.

Susan, one of Ramona's classmates, is a know-it-all.

Hobart, Mrs. Kemp's son, wants to marry Aunt Bea."

ILLUSTRATIONS THROUGHOUT BY ALAN TIEGREEN FROM THE BOOKS BY BEVERLY CLEARY: *RAMONA AND HER FATHER, RAMONA AND HER MOTHER, RAMONA QUIMBY AGE 8, RAMONA FOREVER,* AND *RAMONA'S WORLD.* © WILLIAM MORROW AND COMPANY, INC., NEW YORK, NY. USED BY PERMISSION.

The Story

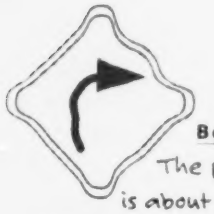
"The play *Ramona Quimby* is about me and my family, and the problems we have to deal with on Klickitat Street, where we live. At school, Ramona is always getting into trouble with her teacher Mrs. Griggs because she has an 'overactive imagination.' At home, Ramona and I fight sometimes because she's always doing things like hiding her dolls in the lasagna I make for dinner.

"Ramona gets upset when she finds out that our Aunt Bea is getting married to Hobart and moving to Alaska. Ramona's gonna miss her!

"There are even worse problems in the play. Our dad works in a frozen food warehouse, but he loses his job. Because he's afraid that he won't be able to pay all our bills, he starts smoking again!

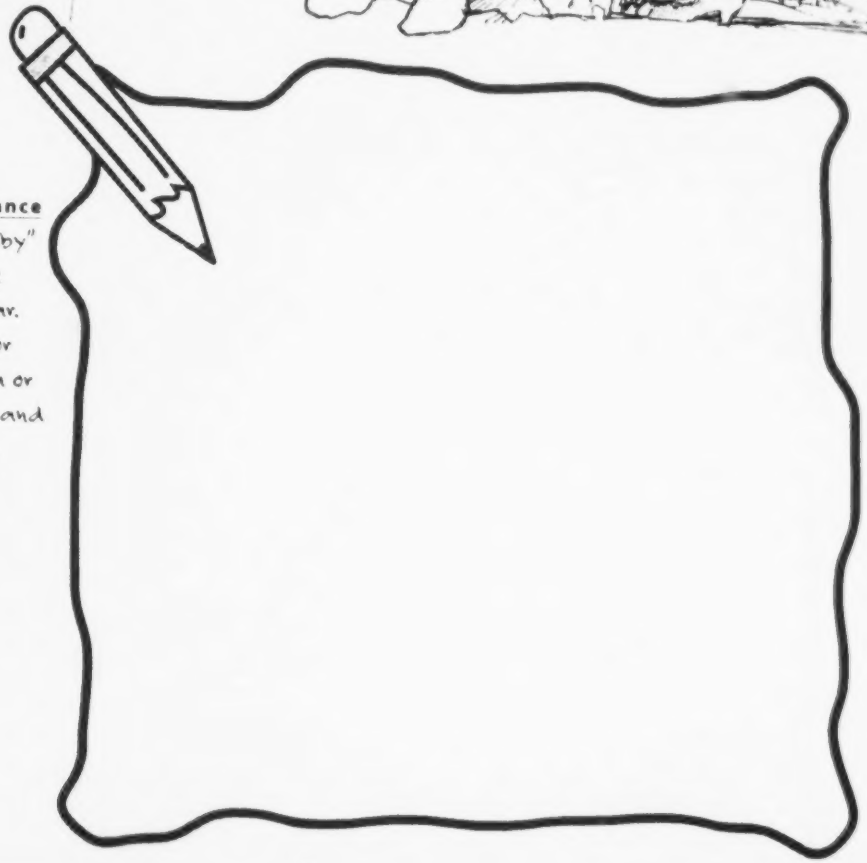
"To help our dad out, Mom gets a job as a receptionist in a doctor's office. Ramona wants to help, too, by getting a job acting in a television commercial, but things don't work out as planned.

"In the end, we have to help organize our Aunt Bea's wedding. And we learn that if we Quimbys stick together, we can solve any problem."



Before the Performance

The play "Ramona Quimby" is about my family and the things that happen to it over a year. Do you have any brothers, sisters, or cousins? Are they more like Ramona or me? Draw a picture of your family and share it with your class or friends.



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Your Neighborhood

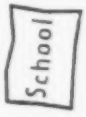
The Setting of "Ramona Quimby"

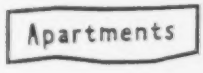
"Some plays are about princesses, or detectives, or even presidents, but *Ramona Quimby* is a play about regular people just like you. Most of the play takes place in our house on Klickitat Street and in our neighborhood. We live in a town that could be just like yours. In the play, here are some of the places you'll see:

- **The Glenwood School.** It's close enough to our house that Ramona and Howie can walk there.
- **Aunt Bea's apartment.** It's in the tallest building in the city.
- **The Frost King Frozen Food warehouse.** It's where our dad works – until he loses his job.
- **The Whooperburger hamburger restaurant.** It's our favorite place to go for dinner. Yummy!"

Before the performance: Think about your own neighborhood. Which places do you visit often? In class or at home, arrange furniture or toys to create a favorite place in your neighborhood.

During the performance: See what **props** and **set pieces** are used to recreate Ramona's world.





props — objects an actor uses in a play to help tell the play's story

set pieces — objects used in a play to help create different locations

From Book to Play

"Playwright Len Jenkin wrote the play *Ramona Quimby*. Playwrights think up the dialogue (the words) the actors speak in the play. They also decide the plot (what happens to the characters) in their plays. Sometimes, playwrights invent new characters and plots for their plays. Other times, they take characters and plots from books for their plays. Len Jenkin took the characters and plot for *Ramona Quimby* from different books – all about Ramona and us Quimbys – written by Beverly Cleary. The books are:

- *Ramona the Pest*, about Ramona and her teacher
- *Ramona and her Father*, about Ramona's dad losing his job
- *Ramona Forever*, about Aunt Bea's wedding to Hobart."

Before the performance:

Pretend you're a playwright. Pick a favorite book to turn into a play. Which characters from the book will be in your play? What will your characters say and do? If you like, you can ask some of your classmates or friends to be actors in your play and you can perform it for your class or family.

After the performance:

Go to your library and find one of the Ramona books by Beverly Cleary. Read it or have someone read it to you. How is the book different from the play? How is it alike?

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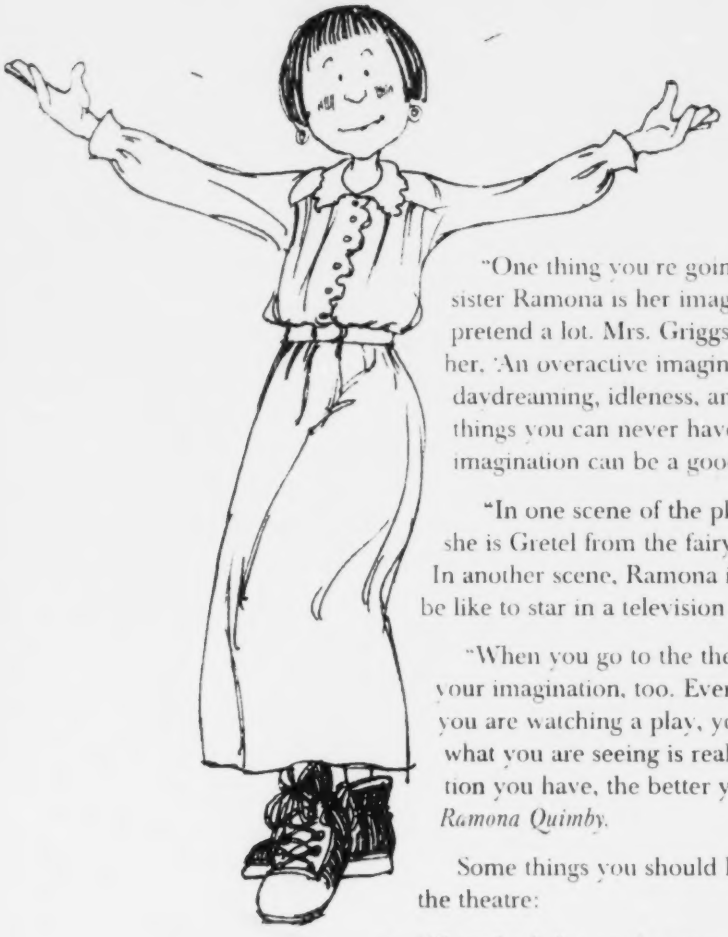
Imagination in "Ramona Quimby"



"One thing you re going to notice about my sister Ramona is her imagination. She likes to pretend a lot. Mrs. Griggs, her teacher, says to her, 'An overactive imagination can lead to daydreaming, idleness, and wanting all sorts of things you can never have. But having an imagination can be a good thing, too.

"In one scene of the play, Ramona pretends she is Gretel from the fairy tale *Hansel and Gretel.* In another scene, Ramona imagines what it would be like to star in a television commercial.

"When you go to the theater, you have to use your imagination, too. Even though you know you are watching a play, you have to pretend that what you are seeing is real. The more imagination you have, the better you will understand *Ramona Quimby.*

Some things you should know before going to the theatre:

- When the lights on the stage change during a performance – either become brighter or dimmer or change color – that means that you are now watching a new scene.
- Places are suggested by use of props or furniture."

Use Your Imagination.

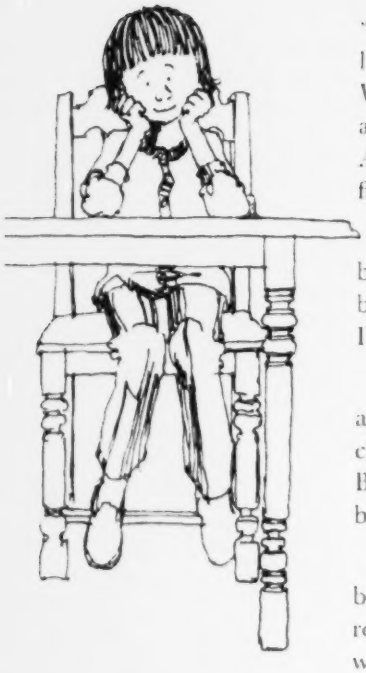
Before the performance:

Pretend you are an actor performing a scene from your favorite fairy tale. Which character are you? What costume are you wearing? What props do you need?

After the performance:

Try to think of what might happen to Ramona and Beezus after "Ramona Quimby" ends. What kind of adventures do they have?

Beverly Cleary



"There are many books about Ramona and my family, and all of them were written by Beverly Cleary. When she was a little girl like Ramona, Beverly read all of the children's books in her town's library. Although she loved to read, Beverly couldn't always find the kinds of books she liked best.

"One time, Beverly said: 'I wanted to read about boys and girls who lived in the same kind of neighborhood I lived in and went to a school like the one I attended.

"When she was in the sixth grade, Beverly wrote a story for school. She read it aloud in front of her class. The teacher liked the story so much, she told Beverly she should become a writer of children's books—which is what happened.

"After getting married, Beverly wrote her first book, *Henry Huggins*. She wrote the book in a spare room of her house, with a view of trees outside her window. 'It was an ideal place for writing,' Beverly said.

"Since *Henry Huggins*, Beverly has written more than 30 books.

"If you like the play *Ramona Quimby*, you may want to read some of Beverly Cleary's Ramona books, including *Beezus and Ramona*, *Ramona the Brave*, and *Ramona Quimby, Age 8*."

Resources

You may want to...

Read an autobiography of Beverly Cleary:

Cleary, Beverly. *A Girl from Yamhill, a Memoir*. New York: Morrow Books, 1988.

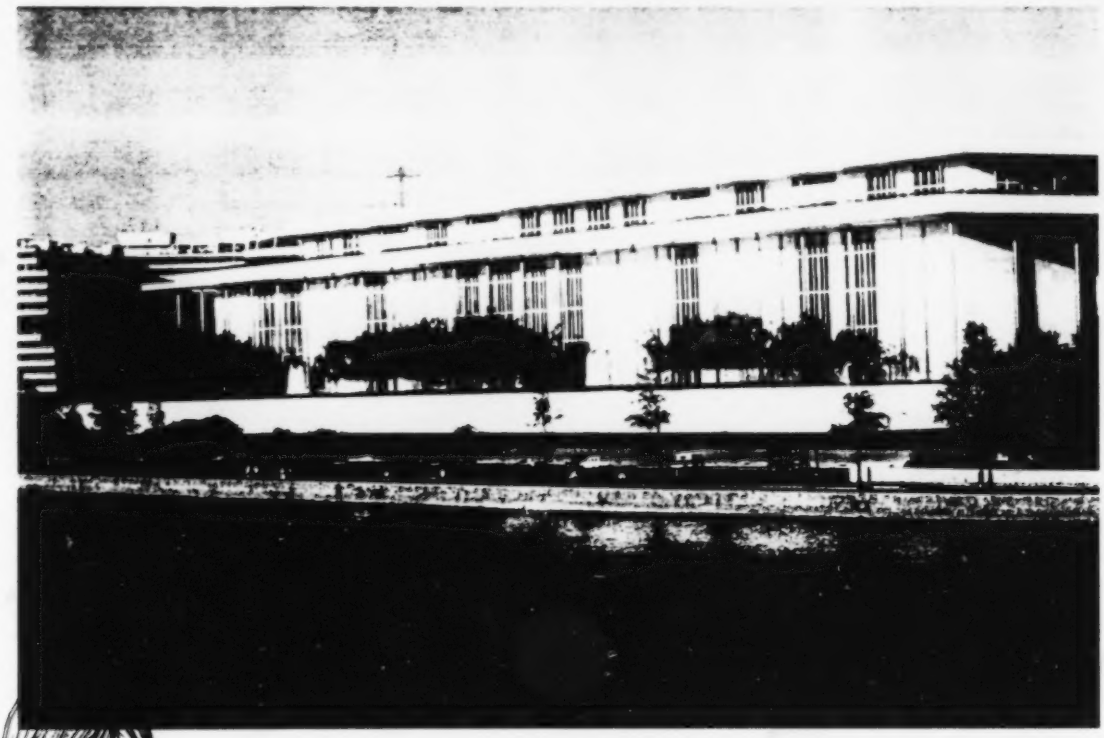
Visit the webpage:

The (Unofficial) Beverly Cleary homepage at http://www.teleport.com/~krp/cleary.html

Or watch the video:

Ramona, a ten part series originally shown on public television. Atlantis films, Ltd./Lancit Media Productions, Ltd, 1987.

Going to the Kennedy Center



"The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, has six theaters! It was named for John F. Kennedy, who was a popular president of the United States.

"To get to the Kennedy Center from your school, you will have to ride a bus. I love riding the bus – but not as much as riding in my Aunt Bea s yellow convertible. When you get to the Kennedy Center s Hall of States, look up and see the flags from all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the five U.S. Territories. Afterwards, you ll take an elevator up to the Kennedy Center s top floor to get to the Theater Lab, where *Ramona Quimby* will be performed. The Theater Lab is big enough to seat 400 audience members."

You the Audience

"You play a very important role in the performance of *Ramona Quimby:* you re the audience! Going to a play is different from watching television or a movie because the actors are right there in front of you. They can see and hear you if you talk during the performance. Acting is hard work, and the performers need to concentrate. Help them by watching and listening carefully – and by responding to what is happening on stage. Clap at the end of the performance if you enjoyed watching me and my sister and all of our adventures."

The Kennedy Center

James A. Johnson
Chairman

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Cuesheet / Ramona Quimby

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